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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/NEA-SCA, DS/DSS/CC, DS/IP/ITA, DS/ICI/PII

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC

SUBJECT: EMBASSY DHAKA USAID LOCAL CONTRACTOR ROBBED AT GUNPOINT

REF: DHAKA 108, DHAKA 519

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. On February 12, 2006, ARSO was notified that a USAID contractor had been the subject of a robbery in the Diplomatic Enclave.

¶2. On February 12, 2006, ARSO interviewed the contractor (employee works for RTI International and this organization receives donor money from USAID and has a close Embassy affiliation). The contractor stated that on February 8, at approximately 20:00, the contractor hired a three wheeled "baby taxi" to take him home from the Gulshan area (within the Diplomatic Enclave where emboff residences are located). While on his way home, in the enclave area of Banani, at the intersection of Road 27 and Kemal Ataturk Ave., the CNG slowed down and several young men entered from both sides of the CNG. One suspect sat on the lap of the contractor and covered the mouth of the contractor. During this time, one of the suspects sitting next to him brandished what felt like was a small caliber gun and shoved it in the ribs of the contractor. The suspects gave several strikes to the head of the contractor. All throughout, the baby taxi driver was driving around without any guidance. The suspects then searched the backpack of the contractor and took a laptop computer, mobile phone, and approximately 180 dollars in local currency. Finally, the suspects told the contractor to close his eyes or else he would go blind. After closing his eyes, the suspects rubbed an unknown ointment that burned the eyes. The contractor was then thrown out of the CNG. After being able to see a little, the contractor made his way to a phone shop and managed to call his office where a colleague came and picked him up.

¶3. The contractor later went to the local police station to make a report.

¶4. RSO Comment: This is the third violent crime within about a month for embassy affiliated staff (reflets A-B). RSO believes that this crime is growing because of the success of this particular criminal attack and the inability of the police to investigate such crimes. At this point, it does not seem that Mission personnel are being targets, but rather the individuals have been targeted because they might have resembled businessmen. However, the fact that these crimes are happening within the diplomatic enclave on a regular basis is cause for concern. Furthermore, it seems that there are reoccurring themes to these robberies:

- A) The employee is immediately overtaken without any chance of escaping from the situation;
- B) The group of suspects seems to be collaborating with the driver of the baby taxi;
- C) Gratuitous violence is used to intimidate;

- D) A firearm is brandished;
- E) The suspects use a skin burning agent to incapacitate the victim and prevent them from identifying the suspects or taxi;

Mission employees have continued to face criminal activity throughout Dhaka, especially on public transportation. RSO continues to recommend against the use of public transportation due to safety and security concerns, but for locally employed staff, this is typically not an option. With the recent trends in mind, and an established area of operation, the RSO will be working with the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to try and apprehend the individuals. Furthermore, RSO will issue a security notice outlining recent crime trends that specifically address this type of crime and measures that LES can take to minimize their chance of becoming a victim.

15. (U) Point of contact is Regional Security Office Dhaka, 8802-885-5500 X2228.

CHAMMAS